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534 rattle as being in use in old times. It was said to be large and flat, but he had never seen one. Very likely it was the turtle-shell rattle, for we know that such a rattle was employed. The women dancers, or rather the leaders among them, as we know, had several tortoise-shell rattles fastened to their calves. Neither the drum nor the rattle
535 was painted. An experienced man or woman acted as leader, and sometimes there were two or more. The usual circuit was sinistral, and this was departed from only to introduce variety. One reason given for the accustomed circuit is that the dancers carried feather fans in their left hands to screen their eyes from the fire while their right hands, the more serviceable ones, were left free for any other purpose. Another reason was that the sun goes that way, for in almost everything observance of the signs of the sun and moon are in evidence. Purely social dances were held most often, it is said, when the moon was full, but ceremonies were performed near the period of the new moon. The fact that dances were held so often in the full of the moon, however, gave early travelers an impression that the Indians observed a ceremony every month. While there were, as we shall note presently, certain ceremonies observed from time to time, most of those that have passed as such were little more than social dances. Although nearly all Indians were intensely fond of dancing, I was told that some persons did not like to dance because they thought dancing would hurt their bones. On the other hand there was a saying among the Creeks that they had to dance after taking medicine in order to overcome it. Otherwise they thought it would get the better of and kill them.

Regarding their songs and dances Bartram remarks as follows:

"They have an endless variety of steps, but the most common, and that which I term the most civil, and indeed the most admired and practised amongst themselves, is a slow shuffling alternate step; both feet move forward one after the other, first the right foot foremost, and next the left, moving one after the other, in opposite circles, i. e. first a circle of young men, and within, a circle of young women, moving together opposite ways, the men with the course of the sun, and the females contrary to it; the men strike their arm with the open hand, and the girls clap hands, and raise their shrill sweet voices, answering an elevated shout of the men at stated times of termination of the stanzas; and the girls perform an interlude or chorus separately.

●533 "To accompany their dances they have songs of different classes, as martial, bacchanalian and amorous; which last, I must confess, are extravagantly libidinous; and they have moral songs, which seem to be the most esteemed and practised, and answer the purpose of religious lectures.

"Some of their most favourite songs and dances, they have from their enemies, the Chactaws: for it seems these people are very

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eminent for poetry and music; every town amongst them strives to excel each other in composing new songs for dances; and by a custom amongst them, they must give at least one new song, for exhibition, at every annual busk." [15]

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The last paragraph records an important tendency observed in many other parts of America, and in this case we have it confirmed by personal observation, for a few days after the arrival of Bartram at Muklasa town a youth in his party who had spent some time in the Choctaw country communicated to the townspeople at their earnest solicitation certain of the songs he had learned.[16]

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Swan says:

"In general, their dances are performed with the most violent contortions of the limbs, and an excessive exertion of the muscular powers.

"They have sometimes most farcial dramatic representations, which terminate in the grossest obscenity." [17]

The dances peculiar to the busk will be considered in connection with that ceremonial. The others were principally animal dances, some of which were danced at the time of the busk and some not. Jackson Lewis gave me the following names of dances:

Tcolàko obànga, "the horse dance."
Totolos obànga, "the chicken dance."
Yanàsa obànga, "the bison dance."
Okiànwa obànga, "the catfish dance."
Futco obànga, "the duck dance."
Akàtàlàswà obànga, "the small frog dance" (the akàtàlàswa is a small and very noisy frog).
Isàbà obànga, "the garfish dance."
Yàbifega obànga, "the sheep dance."
Yifolo obànga, "the screech-owl dance."
Tcula obànga, "the fox dance."
Istikini obànga, "the horned-owl dance."
Itchas obànga, "the beaver dance."
Kowegi obànga, "the quail dance."
Hitute obànga, "the snow dance."
Kono obànga, "the skunk dance."
Tcito obànga, "the snake dance."
Wàtolà obànga, "the crane dance."
Nokos obànga, "the bear dance."
Ogiyìha obànga, "the mosquito dance."
Suli obànga, "the buzzard dance."
Atculàlgi obànga, "old people's dance."

[15] Bartram, Travels, pp. 503-504.
[16] Ibid., p. 505.
[17] Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. v, p 277